Church Universal 10/16/60

ONE OF MY FIRST THOUGHTS AFTER I ASSUMED YOUR PULPIT AND ONE THAT HAS RECURRED TO ME TIME AND TIME AGAIN IS HOW DIFFICULT IT MUST BE FOR MEMBERS OF THIS CHURCH TO HAVE ANY CONCEPTION OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH--THE CHURCH: HOW HARD IT MUST BE TO FEEL A SENSE OF BELONGING AND UNITY WITH ALL OTHER CHRISTIANS. THIS IS A PROBLEM THAT IS PREVALENT THROUGHOUT CHRISTENDOM IN CONGREGATIONS OF EVERY SIZE AND TYPE. PEOPLE BECOME SO INVOLVED IN THEIR LOCAL DENOMINATION THAT THEY TEND TO FORGET THAT THE PARTICULAR DENOMINATION OR CHURCH IS JUST A SEGMENT OF THE LARGER BODY WE CALL THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST--THIS INCLUDES ROMAN CATHOLICS, BAPTISTS, LUTHERANS AND METHODISTS AND THE DYER UNION PROTESTANT CHURCH. A CHURCH LIKE OURS ISUNDER A PARTICULAR DISADVANTAGE BECAUSE THERE IS NO LARGER VISIBLE INSITUTION OF WHICH WE CAN SAY WE ARE A PART, HAVING NO OUTWARD ties with other churches of like interests AND LIKE BELIEFS IT IS VERY EASY TO LOSE SIGHT OF THE ALL IMPORTANT FACT OF A CHRISTIANITY THAT IS A UNITY BECAUSE OF ITS COMMON LORD AND SAVIOR. THE OTHER DISADVANTAGE IN FEELING AN ESSENTIAL ROLE IN THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL HAS TO DO WITH SIZE. SMALLER CONGREGATION SUCH AS THIS ONE FIND IT IMPOSSIBLE TO BE THE SOLE SPONSORS OF A MISSIONARY, IT IS USUALLY A FINANCIAL IMPOSSIBILITY TO MAKE GREAT CONTRIBUTIONS TO BENEVOLENCES THUSLY THERE SEEMS TO BE NO TIES WITH THE ENTERPRISE CHRISTIANITY IS ENGAGED IN--IN THE WORLD TODAY. I WILL DEAL WITH THESE SPECIFIC PROBLEMS THAT FACE THIS CONGREGATION LATER--LET IT SUFFICE HERE AT THE ~~ONSET~~ TO SAY THAT WE MUST CONSTANTLY BE ON GUARD AGAINST THE TEN-DENCY TO CONSIDER OUR FELLOWSHIP HERE AS AN "OUR GANG BRAND OF CHRISTIANITY." FOR WHAT

Leber's copy

? ?

working

word change

sensitivity to Widow's mite - "great" in whose eyes?

keep the ones you already have:

poor sentence

outset?

VEGATIVE TONE IS UNHEALTHY

method - content relations

they have found the Historical Jesus?

IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN DYER UNION CHURCH IS THE FACT THAT WE ARE PART OF THE MILLIONS WHO HAVE FOUND IN JESUS ~~OF NAZARETH~~ CHRIST THEIR LORD AND SAVIOR AND WHO ARE ~~XX~~ WITNESSING? TO THIS FACT AS MEMBERS OF HIS CHURCH.

one of the oldest confessions of faith

IN THE OLDEST COMPLETE STATEMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH, THE APOSTLES' CREED, ~~WE~~ we (wake) SAY THAT WE BELIEVE IN THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH, AND BY THIS WE MEAN --HOLY--ESTABLISHED BY OUR LORD HIMSELF AS THE CONTINUATION OF HIS MINISTRY ON EARTH,--CATHOLIC--THAT IT ~~IS~~ UNIVERSAL, ALL INCLUSIVE AND TO WITNESS TO ALL OF MANKIND. BY THE HOLY CATHOLIC

is there such a thing?

CHURCH WE MEAN THE INVISIBLE INSTITUTION BEHIND ALL LOCAL CONGREGATIONS, COUNCILS, PRESBYTERIES AND DIOCESES THAT BINDS US ALL TOGETHER AS RECIPIENTS OF GOD'S GRACE AND FORGIVENESS.

Some Critics

~~OPPONENTS~~ OF THE CHURCH HAVE OFTEN SAID THAT JESUS NEVER INTENDED HIS FOLLOWERS TO BE ORGANIZED, THAT THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH WAS FOUNDED ON A FALACY--AND THAT TRUE CHRISTIANITY IS TO BE FOUND OUTSIDE THE CHURCH, NOT IN A GROUP OF SQUABBLING, ARGUING, SINFUL MEN.

A QUICK LOOK AT THE NEW TESTAMENT SHOWS THAT FROM THE BEGINNING THE CHURCH WAS [THE COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS, A CORPORATE BODY.] IN THE FIRST CENTURY, THE FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST

a group of "believers" who felt themselves to be united in

were joyfully drawn (like ... homecoming game?)

FELT COMPELLED TO GATHER TOGETHER TO WORSHIP, SING HUMNS, AND TO CELEBRATE THE "LOVE FEAST." FROM THIS CAME THE LATER COMMUNAL LIVING EXPERIEMENTS WHERE ALL LIVED AND SHARED FOR THE GOOD OF ALL. THERE IS NO DOUBT ABOUT IT, ONE OF THE MARKS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE WAS MEMBERSHIP IN A NEW COMMUNITY--AND TODAY THE CONCEPT IS STILL VALID.

poor sentence

weak - now we know even more deeply

expand on this term: fellowship, communion, unity, community

BEING A CHRISTIAN INVOLVES MEMBERSHIP IN THE COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS THE SAME AS IT DID 2,000 YRS. AGO. THE NEW TESTAMENT DESCRIBES THE LIFE OF THIS SOCIETY AS LIFE IN THE SPIRIT. THE HEBREW WORD FOR SPIRIT ORIGINALLY DEVOTED "WIND," THAT MIGHTY ENERGY OF THE DESERT FROM WHICH ISRAEL SPRANG. THE CHURCH, AS THE COMMUNITY OF THE REDEEMED, IS THE NEW ISRAEL OF GOD. IT IS A BODY, WHOSE HEAD IS CHRIST AND WHOSE MEMBERS ARE INDIVIDUAL BELIEVERS. IN SHORT, CHRISTIAN LIFE IS NOT ACCIDENTLY CORPORATE, IT IS NOT LIFE IN A COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS BECAUSE FIRST CENTURY CHRISTIANS FOUND STRENGTH IN NUMBERS--IT IS SO BY ITS VERY NATURE AS THE BODY OF CHRIST.

YOU HAVE ALL HEARD THE STOCK REPLY FROM HESITANT MEMBERS THAT THEY CAN WORSHIP GOD AS WELL AT HOME, OR LISTENING TO A SERVICE OVER THE RADIO, OR IN THE WOODS--AS HE CAN SITTING IN A SMOKEY SANCTUARY. ALTHOUGH THEIR IS A LOT TO SAY FOR INDIVIDUAL'S ENCOUNTERING THEIR LORD ALONE, FACE TO FACE, THIS KIND OF TALK CREATES A DIVISION THAT IS SIMPLY INTOLERABLE. GOD CAN BE SEEN IN NATURE, AND PRAISED FOR HIS MAGNIFICENT HANDIWORK--BUT OUR BELIEFS CONCERNING HIM, OUR CONFESSING AND WITNESSING MISSION ARE INEXTRICABLY INTERWOVEN WITH THE PAST AND PRESENT FUNCTIONS OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST. THE CHURCH OR THE COMMUNITY PRESENTS THE LORD TO EACH INDIVIDUAL: THE BEAUTY OF CORPORATE WORSHIP LIES IN THE FACT THAT WE GATHER AND SING OUR PRAISES AS A GROUP, WE ENRICH EACH OTHERS' EXPERIENCE OF WORSHIP BY OUR ENDEAVORS BUT AT THE SAME TIME WE

ENCOUNTER OUR LORD PERSONALLY, INDIVIDUALLY FACE TO FACE. ALTHOUGH CERTAINLY NOT OMIT TURE IN EVERY INSTANCE I THINK WE CAN GENERALLY CONSIDER weak THE PERSON WHO CHOOSES TO STAY HOME SUNDAY MORNING, SITTING IN THE BACKYARD READING THE FUNNIES WHILE LISTENING TO A SERMON ON THE RADIO AS NOT BEING IN wordage THE DEPTHS OF ULTIMATE CONCERN AS IS THE TYPICAL Poor Phrasing PIOUS CLAIM. PUTTING IT AS BLUNTLY AS POSSIBLE A PARTIAL OR COMPLETE REJECTION OF THE CHURCH IS A REJECTION OF PART AND PARCEL ? OF CHRISTIANITY. organized, or the faith, or The Lord, or the brethren? etc.

AT FIRST, THE CLASSICAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH MAY SEEM TO BE AT VARIANCE WITH THE FACTS. ~~ALL THIS~~ TALK the statements ABOUT ONE HOLY, CATHOLIC CHURCH, THE BODY OF CHRIST IS NICE-- better word BUT THINGS JUST AREN'T LIKE THAT. ROMAN CATHOLICS CLAIM THEY HOLD THE KEYS TO HEAVEN, PROTESTANTS IN THE REFORMED TRADITION FROWN ON ROMAN LEGALISM, ANGLICAN FORMALISM AND EVANGELICAL ENTHUSIASM--AND FUNDAMENTALISTS ARE POSITIVE THAT EVERYBODY ELSE IS GOING STRAIGHT TO HELL. INDEED THE CHURCH, ~~IS~~ does not appear to be NOT LIKE THE SEAMLESS ROBE OF CHRIST BUT, A MORE LIKE PATCHWORK QUILT. ~~BUT~~ BEFORE WE THINK ABOUT THE MANY PITFALLS ENDURED BY CHRISTIANITY AND THE WIDE VARIETY OF INTERPRETATIONS, LET US PAUSE TO REMEMBER THAT WE ALL CALL JESUS ~~CH~~ CHRIST OUR LORD, WE ALL ATTEMPT TO OVERCOME OUR wordage INHERENT SINFULNESS BY PETITIONS TO OUR HEAVENLY FATHER. SOMEHOW, VERY ~~VAGUE~~ VAUGELY AT TIMES, BUT SOMEHOW WE ARE UNITED, THE BODY OF JESUS CHRIST ON EARTH.

→ this points up your own problem to solve, first - then structure sermon.

THE PICTURE THE CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN CHURCH PRESENTS HAS BEEN ILLUSTRUED IN TWO

STRIKING ANALOGIES THAT DEMONSTRATE AT ONCE THE BASIC UNITY OF THE CHURCH AND ALSO THE GRAVE DIFFERENCES THAT SEPARATE ITS MEMBERS.

PICTURE IN YOUR MINDS A MAN WALKING DOWN A ROAD. THE MAN REPRESENTS CHRISTIANITY AND THE ROAD HISTORY. THE UNFORTUNATE MAN IS HAVING QUITE A TIME STRUGGLING DOWN THE ROAD BECAUSE HE IS ON CRUTCHES AND HAS TWO VERY KXXXXXX INSUFFICIENT LEGS. THE ONE LEG IS VERY LONG AND STIFF AND UNABLE TO BEND. THIS OF COURSE IS THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH WITH ITS UNINTERRUPPTED PAST OF UNCOMPROMISING LEGALISM, THE CRUTCHES REPRESENT THE DOCTRINES OF PAPAL INFALLIBILITY AND THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION. THE OTHER LEG IS NO BETTER--IT IS QUITE SHORT AND THE ENLARGED FOOT HAS HUNDREDS OF TOES ALL MOVING INDIFFERENT DIRECTIONS. THIS OF COURSE IS THE SORRY PLIGHT OF CONTEMPORARY PROTESTANTISM. AS YOU CAN IMAGINE THE MAN'S PROGRESS IS NEGLIGIBLE AS A MATTER OF FACT--BECAUSE OF THESE STRANGE LEGS HE SEEMS ONLY TO BE ABLE TO WALK IN CIRCLES.

IN THE OTHER ANALOGY A LOOK AT CHRISTIANITY IS COMPARED TO A TRIP TO A MIRROR GALLERY, WHERE CURVES IN THE GLASS SURFACE CAUSE THE MIRRORS TO PRODUCE QUITE DISTORTED REFLECTIONS SOME REFLECTIONS ARE SHORT AND FAT, OTHERS TALL AND THIN, SOME HAVE BIG HEADS ETC. AND YET THEY ARE ALL REFLECTIONS OF THE SAME THING.

THESE TWO EXAMPLES VERY CLEARLY PORTRAY OURPLIGHT. SEEMINGLY IRRESOLUBLE CONFLICTS HAVE MADE PROGRESS AND AT TIME EXISTENCE SEEM IMPOSSIBLE BUT THE MUTILATED MAN NEVER CEASES TO STRUGGLE DOWN THE ROAD AND REGARDLESS OF DISTORTIONS THE MIRRORS

ARE REFLECTING THE SAME OBJECT. HUMAN SINFULNESS AND FRAILTY ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DIVISIONS WITHIN CHRISTIANITY AND YET CHRISTIANITY REMAINS. IN A REVIVAL TENT, THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE OR THE 1ST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF CHICAGO THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST IS OFFERED TO SINFUL HUMANITY, A SANCTUARY FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD IS PRESENT AND THIS IS THE CHURCH. — is it?

FOR A MOMENT I WOULD LIKE TO RETURN TO THE MIRROR GALLERY AND EXAMINE THE DOMINANT CHARACTERISTICS OF AND THE MAJOR DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO MAIN REFLECTIONS OF THE ~~CHRIST~~ Church.

too heavy = this sentence needs to be re-done, too.

(IN THE FIRST MIRROR THE CHURCH IS VISIBLE AS A GREAT AND IMPRESSIVE INSTITUTION. IT IS A FELLOWSHIP OF BELIEVERS TOO, OF COURSE, WHO HOLD THE TRUE FAITH AND PARTICIPATE IN THE SACRAMENTS. BUT ITS SPECIFIC DIFFERENTIA LIES IN A CENTRALIZED ORGANIZATION WHICH HERE IS AT A MAXIMUM. IN STRUCTURE AND ADMINISTRATION THIS CHURCH RESEMBLES A STATE, AND WHAT IS MORE, AN ANTOCRACYL. IN THIS CHURCH THE UNDERLYING THEORIES OF POLITICAL AUTOCRACY ARE PUSHED TO THEIR LOGICAL END, DIVINELY GUARANTEED INFALLIBILITY OF ITS HEAD. THIS CHURCH IS CHARACTERIZED BY AN ABSOLUTE AND UNCOMPROMISING LEGALISM. IN THESE TERMS THERE CAN BE NO SALVATION OUTSIDE OF ITS DOORS. LOYALTY TO CHRIST IS DEFINED AS OBEDIANCE TO HIS VICAR ON EARTH. INSTEAD OF THINKING OF THE CHURCH IN TERMS OF GOD, THIS SYSTEM THINKS OF GOD IN TERMS OF THE CHURCH AND THROUGH ITS DIVINELY GIVEN SYSTEM OF MEDIATION ALONE, MAY THE SINNER FIND FORGIVENESS.

? partake of ?

dinosaur?

poor working — ?

THE VERY ESSENCE OF THIS CHURCH LIES IN ITS RULING HIERARCHY RATHER THAN IN THE PERSONAL FAITH OF ITS MEMBERS. NOWHERE IS THIS DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH STATED MORE EXPLICITLY THAN IN AN ENCYCLICAL OF ~~XXX~~ POPE PIUS THE X AN INSPIRED UTTERANCE OF FEB. ~~XXXX~~ 1906.

? how use this word?

~~XXXX

IT HAS BEEN ACCURATELY STATED THAT "AN INSTITUTION WITH OFFICIAL RULES SEEMS A BETTER SECURITY RISK THAN A FELLOWSHIP WITH DIVINE GIFTS."

BUT NOW LET US LOOK AT THE OTHER MIRROR AND BEHOLD AN EQUAL DISTORTION BUT OF AN EXACTLY OPPOSITE NATURE OF THE ONE JUST DESCRIBED. THE EMPHASIS IN THIS CHURCH SEEMS TO BE ENTIRELY ON THE INDIVIDUAL, TOTALITARIANISM IS QUITE FORGOTTEN, IT IS NOT A GREAT CORPORATE INSTITUTION TAKING PRECEDENCE OVER THE INDIVIDUAL BUT THE REVERSE. THE BELIEVING INDIVIDUAL BEING THE POINT OF IMPORTANCE OUTWARD INSTITUTIONAL FORCES ARE DECIDEDLY SECONDARY. THIS CHURCH CLAIMS TO BE A FELLOWSHIP OF INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST AND SEEK TO WALK TOGETHER IN OBEDIANCE TO HIM. IMPRESSION AS IT SEEMS THIS CHURCH FEATURES MANY DISTORTIONS AND DIFFERENCES AND TO AN OUTSDIE OBSERVER WOULD PROBABLY SEEM NO LESS A DISTORTION THAN THE LEGALISTIC TYPE.

400 YEARS AGO THE TWO MEN THAT WERE LARGELY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION ESTABLISHED THE TONE FOR THE PROTESTANT CHURCH EVER SINCE. MARTIN LUTHER AND HULDRICH ZUINGLE MET ZUINGLE MET IN AN ATTEMPT TO UNITE THE TWO FACTIONS OF THE PROTESTERS: THEY AGREED ON 14 OUT OF 15 OF THE POINTS OF THE REFORMED FAITH. BECAUSE OF THEIR BELIEFS AND OPINIONS NEITHER ONE FOUND IT POSSIBLE TO COMPROMISE AND EACH WENT HIS SEPARATE WAY. THE LUTHERAN CHURCH EVOLVED FROM GERMANY, THE REFORMED CHURCHES FROM SWITZERLAND, DIFFERING SO VERY SLIGHTLY BUT FROM THAT TIME THE HOPE OF A UNIFIED PROTESTANTISM WAS LOST. THE BAPTISTS APPEARED FROM A GROUP OF MEN WHO DIFFERED ON THE METHOD OF BAPTISING

AND CHURCH POLITY. ANGLICANS AND CONGREGATIONALISTS WERE THE RESULTS OF INTERNAL ARGUMENTS IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND. THE METHODISTS CHURCH HAD ITS BEGINNINGS IN THE EFFORTS OF A MAN, JOHN WESLEY, WHO HAD NOT TIME FOR ANGLICAN FORMALISM. PRESTYTERIAN GREW IN SCOTLAND AS A RESULT OF JOHN KNOX'S ADMIRATION FOR JOHN CALVIN, ETC. ETC.

MEN ARE DIFFERENT, NO TWO ALIKE, EACH HAS OPINIONS THAT ARE CERTAINLY ACCURATE ALTHOUGH THEY ~~XXXX~~ DISAGREE WITH OTHERS, AND ABOVE ALL MEN ARE SO VERY, VERY SINFUL. PROTESTANTISM HAS PROVIDED THE OPPORTUNITY FOR PERSONAL OPINIONS, PREFERENCES, FOR THE WHOLE SCOPE OF HUMAN EMOTIONS AND DRIVES TO INFLUENCES AND SHAPE DIFFERENT WAYS OF WORSHIPING ~~THE CREATOR~~ JESUS CHRIST. THE INEVITABLE HAS HAPPENED—PERSONAL PREFERENCES HAVE BECOME ABSOLUTE AND ETERNAL TRUTHS. IT IS SORRY INDEED THAT WE HAVE LOST SIGHT OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST TO SUCH A DEGREE THAT SALVATION DEPENDS NOT ON BELIEF IN HIM BUT IN OBEDIANCE TO A SET OF RULES, OR A METHOD OF BAPTISING, OR PARTICIPATION IN A SPECIFIC TYPE OF RITUAL. THE HISTORY OF ROMAN CATHOLICISM PROVIDES A NEAT SUTDY WHEN MEN CHOOSE THE OPPOSITE MEANS WHERE INSTEAD OF OPPORTUNITY FOR PERSONAL EXPRESSION AND AN UNADULDERATED EXPERIENCE WITH OUR CREATOR THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, MEMBERS MUST CONFORM TO AN ORDAINED AND STRICT SYSTEM OF RULES AND MEDIATION THROUGH AN EQUALLY SINFUL PRIESTHOOD. ALONG THE SAME LINE PROTESTANTISM WHILE PROVIDING FOR PERSONALITY DIFFERENCEX AND INDIVIDUAL PREFERENCES SEEMS AT TIMES TO HAVE LOST THE MEANING OF THE WORDS "CHURCH UNIVERSAL." I AM NOT

ADVOCATING COMPLETE UNITY OF ALL DENOMINATIONS UNDER ONE NAME, BUT I AM HOPEFUL FOR A MORE TOLERANT AND INTELLIGENT CONSIDERATION ~~FOR~~ AMONG FELLOW CHRISTIANS. THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH CANNOT BE SEEN IN THE DYER UNION CHURCH OR IN LUTHERANISM OR CATHOLICISM OR ANY OTHER HUMAN ECCLESIASTICAL INSTITUTION BUT RATHER THESE INSTITUTIONS ALL POINT TO THE INVISIBLE FORCE THAT ANIMATES THEM, THE LIFE IN THE SPIRIT , THE INVISIBLE UNIVERSAL CHURCH THE SPIRIT OF UNITY THAT IS EXPRESSED IN THE TITLE GIVEN THE CHURCH, THE BODY OF CHRIST.

IN THE BODY OF CHRIST, AS IN ANY OTHER BODY, THE MEMBERS ARE DIFFERENT AND DIVERSE, HAVING DIFFERENT FUNCTIONSAND NEEDS. THE ARM AND THE LEG ARE TWO ENTIRELY DIFFERENT APPENDAGES BUT WHEN MOTIVATED BY IMPULSES FROM THE BRAIN THEY OPERATE IN ACCORD WITH EACH OTHER, MUTUALLY AIDING THE FUNCTION OF THE OTHER. SO WE AS MEMBERS OF THE BODY OF CHRIST ARE DIFFERENT IN ALL RESPECTS. BUT WHEN MOTIVATED BY THE HEAD, JESUS CHRIST, WE ARE RELATED AS THE MEMBERS OF THE BODY ARE RELATED. ALONE OUR SEPARATE TASKS ARE FUTILE BUT TOGETHER, AS PARTS OF ONE BODY OUR FUNCTIONS TAKE ON NEW MEANING AND RELEVANCE.

TOLERANCE AND COOPERATION ARE THE KEY WORDS FOR A CHRISTIANITY THAT CAN WITNESS TO THE WORLD.

IT IS CLEAR THAT THE CHURCH CANNOT SEE ITS TRUE SELF IN EITHER ONE OF THESE DISTORTING MIRRORS AND WHAT IS MORE TRAGIC IS THE FACT THAT THERE IS NOT PERFECT MIRROR SPOTLESS AND TRUE IN DETAIL: ALL CHURCHES ARE SUBJECT TO HUMAN ERROR AND FALLIBILITY.